

OUTDOORS DIGEST

First Buffalo Calf Of The Season Spotted At Custer State Park

CUSTER STATE PARK — The first buffalo calf of the spring, a bull calf, in Custer State Park was spotted on Tuesday, March 27, 2013. It was found by park staff near the Wildlife Station Visitor Center off the Wildlife Loop Road, on the east side of the park.

The park has about 850 head of bison going into the spring and is expecting around 400 calves. The herd size should be around 1,250 at the Annual Buffalo Roundup in September.

"Spring is a great time to view wildlife in the park," said Chad Kremer, buffalo herd manager. "Deer, antelope, turkey and buffalo can be seen throughout the park right now, and sharp-tailed grouse are strutting on their leks."

Visitors are advised to leave buffalo calves alone. It can be dangerous to approach baby animals, particularly buffalo calves. If a mother buffalo feels she or her calf is threatened, she may charge.

"Occasionally, people will think a buffalo calf has been orphaned and try to rescue it," said Kremer. "This is rarely true; buffalo may roam up to one mile from their calves and come back later for them."

Most buffalo calves are born in May, but a few arrive near the end of March, like this little fellow, into early April at Custer State Park.

For additional information on Custer State Park, please contact the park at 605-255-4515 or visit www.custerstatepark.com.

GFP Welcomes Student Archers To NASP Tourney

PIERRE — Students from across South Dakota will have a chance to show off their archery skills at the Fourth Annual National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) State Tournament on Saturday, April 6.

The tournament, sponsored by South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, will begin at 8 a.m. MDT at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, in Rapid City and will conclude with a trophy ceremony at 6:30 p.m.

More than 500 students will compete for individual and team honors in three age divisions. The top three individual and team winners will receive trophies, and each of the overall individual winners will also be awarded a free bow, compliments of GFP. Students who participate in NASP within their schools or home-school program are eligible for the competition.

There is no admission charge, and the public is invited to the archery tournament. Volunteers who want to help with the tournament may contact outdoorprogramming@gmail.com or call 605-220-2130.

Elk Moved Into Custer SP

PIERRE — A cooperative project was recently completed to help meet the elk management goals of Wind Cave National Park and Custer State Park.

Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) and Wind Cave National Park used contracted helicopters to herd elk from Wind Cave into Custer State Park.

Elk numbers were well above the population goal for Wind Cave and the preferred alternative to reduce the population was facilitated movements of elk out of the park. Elk were moved from Wind Cave to Custer State Park on two occasions — 197 elk on March 1 and another 192 elk on March 8.

The majority of these 389 elk were cows and calves. Twenty-six of these cow elk are radio-collared, allowing biologists to track their movements.

"The plan was to move elk north into CSP and west into Black Hills elk management Unit 3," said Chad Lehman, GFP senior wildlife biologist. "Jump gates were lowered and segments of fence were opened for elk to leave Wind Cave, and we were able to facilitate movement of elk into CSP. Currently these elk remain in CSP, and we will continue monitoring their movements."

After these facilitated movements, it is now estimated that Wind Cave and Custer State Park each have 500 elk.

Platte River SP To Host Beyond BOW Workshop

LINCOLN, Neb. — Experience Platte River State Park in the spring with a daylong Beyond Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop April 27.

The workshop will include horseback riding for beginners, Dutch oven cooking and shooting skills (archery, shotgun and rifle).

Participants must be at least 18 years of age. The registration fee includes meals, but not camping or lodging. A park entry permit is required. Registration and fees are required by April 19. Download a registration form at: <http://www.outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Education/Programs/bow/BeyondBOW/pdf/Horses.pdf>.

Contact Julia Plugge for more information at 402-471-6009, 402-417-3779 or julia.plugge@nebraska.gov.

Trout Will Be Stocked Near Pierre

PIERRE — Rainbow trout will be stocked in two areas near Pierre starting the first week of April.

Game, Fish and Parks Department fisheries biologist Robert Hanten of Fort Pierre said the department will stock catchable-sized rainbow trout at Oahe Marina and Downs Marina.

Trout released in Downs Marina migrate out of the marina and spend several weeks in and around the LaFramboise Island causeway fishing piers.

Interested anglers can locate LaFramboise causeway by following Poplar Avenue south toward the Missouri River. Oahe Marina is located just below Oahe Dam, off Highway 1806 north of Fort Pierre.

Gary Howey | Of The Outdoors

Going To The Dogs In Iowa

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

The weather forecast didn't look good for the Cherokee, Iowa area, the area we'd be calling predators, rain was predicted for Friday evening, continuing into Saturday and later that day, turning into snow.

We'd planned this outing several weeks in advance, arranging our schedules to make the trip fit, so there was no turning back.

Arriving around noon, we grabbed a quick bite at the Fullers and headed north to the land lying along the Little Sioux River, where we'd be hunting and where we'd call home on this trip in a beautiful log cabin lying just off the river.

With me were Team Outdoorsmen Adventures members Larry Myhre (Sioux City, Iowa), with team member and Outdoor Adventures Radio show co-host Simon Fuller of Yankton.

Simon, originally from Cherokee had set the hunt up, getting permission from several land owners in the area and with

Google Earth map in hand, we headed out to do some calling, in an attempt to beat the incoming weather.



Gary HOWEY

Our first set up required a lengthy walk across a muddy corn field, which we learned later was just a short drive from the trail leading to the cabin.

The first hide was along the trees in the fence line adjacent to a wide open field leading down to the river bottom with deeply wooded draws running along both sides ending up near the river.

To me, appeared to be a perfect set up, wind in our face, clear shooting lanes out in front of us to about three hundred yards.

Using his Blitzkrieg predator calls, Larry started calling quietly as not to spook any predators that may be hunkered down close, starting low and gradually raising the volume a bit at a time. Then it happened, sounding like the baying of a pack of hounds coming our way from the south, they seemed to be getting closer and closer by the minute.

What the heck, this wasn't right, was this an omen, we hoped not!

Then it happened, out in front came a deer desperately trying to out run two baying coon hounds.

The deer crashed down into the draw off to my left, shortly there after, a coyote that was bedded down the came charging



PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE
Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member and Outdoor Adventures radio co-host Simon Fuller mans the camera while the author checks out the field out front, waiting for a coyote to appear.

out of the ravines on the far side, a coon hound in hot pursuit.

The coyote, quickly tired of this game, came to a screeching halt, turned and faced the hound, glaring at him, daring it to come closer only to dash off again, back into the ravine and then south across the opening in front of us with both hounds a safe distance behind, all of which happened so quickly that neither I or Larry had the opportunity for a clear shot.

Not exactly the way we'd planned it, but at least we knew there was at least one coyote around.

The following morning as we sat in the cabin listening to the rain pounding down on the roof, contemplating if it would be worth going out into the weather, getting us and our equipment wet.

As we sat there, a heard of deer appeared, bounding out of the tree line into a field to the south. To us, it seemed strange they'd be moving so much in the daylight, shortly thereafter, we had our question answered as a coyote came out behind them, while another appeared, working its way up around the herd, attempting to cut off their escape route.

Frantically grabbing our camera gear, rain suits and rifles, we quickly headed out the door hoping to get set up ahead of the coyotes pursuing the deer.

Working our way to the west, it was obvious, there weren't any places we could set up a hide, forcing us to do so below a

hillside over looking a tree lined draw.

As the day before, Larry would do the calling and be off to my far right, with Simon between us manning the camera.

The mournful cries from Larry's dying rabbit call echoed across the valley, as before, starting off softly, becoming louder with each rendition.

On the opposite hillside, after Larry had quieted his call, a turkey roosting in a tree, flew up into a taller tree, giving me a clue something was up, as something had spooked the bird.

I focused my attention in that direction and as I scanned the hillside, I spotted movement towards the bottom of the hill along a deer trail.

I peered through my scope hoping to get a clear picture as to what I'd seen. As I suspected, it was a coyote, following the trail, cautiously moving down hill towards the ravine

He slipped into the ravine, not giving me the opportunity for a clear shot. Hoping to draw it out of the ravine into the open, I mouth squeaked, thinking it might poke his head up, giving me an opportunity for a quick shot. No such luck, as he disappeared as quickly as he'd appeared.

Coyotes, with their tremendous eye sight, hearing and sense of smell, have the advantage and with three of us out there, there's a lot of things which could go wrong, perhaps it detected a slight movement or the wind may have swirled driving our scent down in his direction, we'll

never know as he was gone.

Our next set would be in the same field we'd set up in the previous day where the coon hounds had spoiled our fun, except this time, we found the trail coming in from the south side directly to it, with no wading through a muddy field required.

As light rain began to fall, I hunkered down on the far left side while Simon set up near Larry on the far right side.

Once again Larry's call echoed across the valley, quietly at first, getting louder after a few minutes.

It didn't take long before things started jumping, as a small herd of deer came running out of the end of the draw near the bottom side of the field. Bringing my rifle up off of the bipod, I scanned the area, hoping to see what had spooked them out of the cover.

Then, Larry's rifle barked, causing the deer I'd been watching to high tail it down in the river bottom.

While I had my attention fixed on the deer at the end of the field, unbeknownst to me, a coyote slipped in off to my right, less than 40 yards from where I was set up. Larry had waited for me to shoot as I was closer to it. He was set up lower than Simon who had the camera zeroed in on the coyote. A slight rise in the field made it impossible for a good shot and after realizing I hadn't seen it, he was forced to rise up for a better shot, seeing the movement, the coyote spooked, allowing Larry to give him a parting shot as the coyote dashed back into the heavily wooded ravine.

As one of our Team Outdoorsmen Adventures members says, "that's why they call it hunting."

When in the outdoors, success isn't always measured by how much game you harvest as time spent with good friends in the outdoors is a huge part of the outdoor experience as is the wildlife you see.

On this trip, we were able to get up close and personal with bald eagles, pheasants, turkey, deer and coyotes and the next time we return to the Cherokee area, it will be another great outdoor experience.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. Howey is the Producer/Host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series which can be seen on Fox affiliates throughout the upper Midwest. He and Simon Fuller are the hosts of the Outdoor Adventures radio program on Classic Hits 106.3 and ESPN Sports Radio 1570. If you're looking for more outdoor information, it can be found at www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



Photos Submitted By Captain Norm's

TOP LEFT: Dan Goeden caught this 13-pound Northern Pike and this 7-pound walleye on the Missouri River by fast water near Gavins Point Dam.

TOP RIGHT: Troy Fisher caught this 10-pound, 3-ounce Northern Pike near Riverside Park on the Missouri River.

LEFT: Derrick Lande caught this 7-pound, 5-ounce walleye on the Missouri River.

2012 Elk Hunting Season Summarized

PIERRE — Based on information gathered from hunters, the Game, Fish and Parks Department has issued a report summarizing the 2012 elk hunting seasons in South Dakota.

A total of 570 licenses were issued for the Black Hills Firearms Elk season, and 416 elk were harvested for a 73 percent success rate. The harvest breakdown: 291 bulls, 125 cows.

Elk hunters averaged more than six days in the field, and 85 percent of them said they hunted public land.

There were 97 licenses sold

for the Black Hills Archery Elk season, and 38 elk were harvested for a success rate of 40 percent. Thirty-three of those elk were bulls. Archery hunters averaged nearly 12 days hunting, and 90 percent said they hunted on public land.

The Prairie Firearms Elk season had 97 licenses sold and 46 elk harvested for a success rate of 47 percent. Hunters averaged about 5 days in the field.

Information for harvest surveys is gathered from a complete sampling of all licensed hunters. GFP uses the data to

determine the success of a hunting season and to provide information for planning the next year's hunting season.

The 2013 elk seasons will be finalized by the Game, Fish and Parks Commission on April 4-5 at the Holiday Inn Express in Winner. The application process will open in mid-April, with a May 17 application deadline.

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